



## **Green spaces and their planning and management in selected Malaysian cities**

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## URBAN FORESTRY: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND PROFITABILITY FOR CITIES

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Cities are the result of impressive modifications of the natural environment in order to adapt it to the needs of the population. However, these transformations and their intensification lead to severe environmental and social problems that must be addressed in order to ensure a sustainable development of urban areas. Urban forestry has been proposed as a way to overcome these problems. This paper presents the most recent results from scientific literature related to urban forestry. It analyzes the environmental and social benefits provided by trees in urban areas, with the objective of evaluating the profitability, for municipalities, of investing resources in the development and management of urban tree cover. Results from this literature review clearly show that trees can have a significant impact on an urban environment by combatting heat islands, capturing air contaminants and reducing water runoff. Economic analyses consistently give positive benefit-cost ratios, mainly because urban populations are willing to pay for the preservation of trees in their environment. Thus, urban forest management programs would be profitable in the long term, in spite of high initial planting and maintenance costs. Moreover, urban forests would help to mitigate the negative impacts of climate changes, especially extreme heat waves and severe rains. However, it is clear that urban forests alone cannot resolve the severe environmental problems observed in cities. In order to address these problems, global and integrated strategies, in which urban forestry could play a major role, must be developed.

## GREEN SPACES AND THEIR PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT IN SELECTED MALAYSIAN CITIES

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Worldwide, attention is growing for the role of green spaces in contributing to the quality of urban life and environment. In countries such as Malaysia, the importance of urban green spaces is recognised, but due to a rapid industrialisation and urbanisation process, maintaining and developing green space is a major challenge. This paper aims to develop the comparative knowledge base on Malaysian green spaces and their planning and management. For this purpose, information was collected about urban green spaces and their legislation, planning and management in six cities in the most urbanized part of Malaysia, the Klang Valley. Data was compiled by means of literature review, document analysis, and written and oral interviews with green space planners and managers in the selected cities. Results show that, in spite of similarities in e.g. municipal green space management organisation and legislation, each city has its own approach in terms of e.g., prioritised green space functions, green space planning and collaboration with different stakeholders. Important lessons can be learnt for the further development of green space planning and management in Malaysia, for example in terms of combining national planning and legislation with local needs and characteristics.

**Keywords:** *Urban green space, green space planning, green space management, Malaysia*